

The Moch Name and Interesting Facts

THE MOCH NAME AND SOME INTERESTING FACTS

Have you ever asked yourself, “Who am I? Where did I come from? Who else shares my name in history?” Well, these are questions many people ask when they are searching for their heritage. We think of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents – the generations before us who shaped our lives both directly and indirectly.

Our family name is the tip of the iceberg in revealing who we are and how we fit into the framework of humanity. As we delve into our ancestry, a treasure hunt reveals little pieces of data that begin to spell out who we are and where we came from. Curiosity and exploration have developed a pathway into our family history through stories and data passed down. As author and educator Robert Penn Warren declared, “History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.”

We can pay homage to our ancestors and those who share our name by discovering and keeping their stories alive. We must ask questions, explore history, and record our lineage so that we have answers to share with future generations when they begin to ask about our past.

Accordingly, I have done some research through family members, Ancestry.com, and the United States Census Report in an effort to flesh out the history of the Mochs. What follows is the fruit of that research.

For starters, we know that Louis Morgan Moch – the patriarch of our branch of Louisiana Mochs – had a half-brother and half-sister, Gill Wilson and Mary Wilson. In fact, the 1870 U.S. Census shows Louis Morgan living with Gill Wilson. At the time of that report, Louis was 10 or 11 years old, and Gill was about 26. According to the 1880 U.S. Census, Gill Wilson was born in 1844 in Alabama. That report also states that both his father and mother were born in Alabama. He was married to Elizabeth Wilson (also born in Alabama, in 1851) and had a stepdaughter, Relvia Cole (born 1863), living in the same household. Tom Florence Wilson, who may have been Gill and Elizabeth’s son or another relative that they were raising, was living in the same household.

Sometime between 1854 (the year that Mary was born) and 1859 (the year that Louis Morgan was born), the family moved from Alabama to Louisiana. Exactly why is a mystery. Nevertheless, Louis Morgan was born in the Bayou State on May 26, 1859. Unfortunately, his mother’s identity also remains a mystery. In all likelihood, she was a slave.

In 1871, Mary Wilson married Peter Conner. The couple had 8 children, including a daughter named Jennie V., who married Andrew Rayson in 1901. Jennie V.’s daughter Mable Lee Rayson (born 1914) married a Cutliff. We mentioned Mable Cutliff in our Memorial Service at the 2008 reunion. Mable Cutliff’s daughter-in-law, Viki Cutliff, sent me information about the Conner family and Mary Wilson Conner (half-sister of Louis Morgan Moch). We have been searching and asking family members about Mary’s mother, but we’ve been unable to find information so far.

As for Louis Morgan Moch, the 1880 Census shows him living in the same household with Moses Conner. Moses was the father of Peter Conner. Louis Morgan was about 21 years old at the time of this report. We know that in 1880 or 1881 he and Relvia were married. Louis and Relvia went on to have 16 children. In the 1900 Census, Louis stated that his mother was born in Alabama and his father was born in Germany. We have been told that Louis’s father was a Jew. We believe his name may have been Henry Moch. (Or Henri Moch, among other possibilities. But more on that subject a little later.) A Shreveport Commercial Directory published in 1875 lists a H. Moch as a business owner on Texas Street. I was told by my father and grandmother that Louis Morgan’s father was a Jewish business owner.

I found the following information from the “Encyclopedia of Southern Jewish Communities” about the Jewish settlement in Shreveport :

Jewish peddlers and merchants from Germany and Alsace began to arrive in Shreveport soon after the town’s founding. By 1848, twelve Jewish families lived in Shreveport. Many of these first settlers intermarried and were lost to the Jewish community, but others clung to their heritage and planted the seeds of Shreveport ’s first Jewish congregation. The earliest Jewish residents of Shreveport prospered in a variety of enterprises.

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 **Description:** <http://brendenj.wix.com/moch-reunion#!history>